

REMARKS

This amendment responds to the office action mailed December 12, 2005. In the office action the Examiner:

- allowed claims 10-22 and 28;
- objected to claims 4-9 and 25 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim; and
- rejected claims 1-3, 23-24 and 26-27 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatch et al. (US 5,471,217)

After entry of this amendment, the pending claims are: claims 1, 3, and 5-24, 26-28.

Overview of Claim Changes

Claims 1 and 27 have been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 2 and 4. Claims 5 and 6 have been rewritten in independent format. Claims 23 and 26 have been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 25. Claims 2, 4 and 25 have been cancelled, and the dependence of claim 3 has been changed accordingly.

Information Disclosure Statement

An information disclosure statement is included in the present reply.

35 U.S.C. 103(a)

In the present Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-3, 23-24 and 26-27 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatch et al. Each of the independent rejected claims (1, 23 and 26) has been rewritten to include the subject matter of a respective claim that the Examiner has identified as being patentable.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above amendments and remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider this application with a view towards allowance. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (650) 843-4000, if a telephone call could help resolve any remaining items.

Respectfully submitted,

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